(d) In the current year, the combined fiscal deficit of the States is budgeted at Rs. 103736 crore, which is equivalent to 4.1 per cent of GDP.

New posts for Custom Commissioners

1974. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Finance has created 140 new posts for Custom Commissioners recently; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) The Government has approved the restructuring of Customs and Central Excise Department, largely with a view to create Tax Administration which is officer oriented, technology driven, and assessee friendly which maximizes revenue productivity by closer supervision over compact Commissionerates and Zones. In addition, the restructuring aims at reinforcing the Directorates of Anti-Evasion and Revenue Intelligence, speeding up the process of disposal of appellate cases, expediting decision making and strengthening the grievance redressal machinery. In the restructured set up, an additional 144 posts of Commissioner level, *viz.* 31 for Central Excise, 07 for Customs, and 106 for Appeals/Adjudication and Directorates, have been created.

Tax on farm income

1975. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to tax farm income with an exception limit of Rs. 1 lakh as recommended by tax conference organised by ASSOCHAM recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government have examined the other recommendations made by the conference; and

(e) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (e) Such proposals, including those made by ASSOCHAM, are examined as a part of pre-budget proposals and the decision of the Government, if any, in this regard will be reflected in the Finance Bill.

Bonds for Co-operative banks

†1976. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are going to issue bonds to the tune of Rs. 8000 crores for co-operative banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that most of the State and District co-operative banks are incurring losses; and

(d) if so, what action Government are taking to get them out of the red?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) Government had constituted a Task Force to study the functioning of co-operative credit system and suggest measures for its strengthening. Subsequently, Government also appointed a Joint Committee to suggest ways of providing revitalization support to co-operative credit structure. Keeping in view the recommendations of these Committees, Government announced in the Union Budget to usher reform in the co-operative banking sector and has made a provision of Rs. 100 crores in the budget to start with to incentivise reforms and revitalize this sector. The amount and nature of assistance/bond alongwith other modalities of the scheme are being worked out.

(c) As reported by NABARD, 137 District Central Co-operative Banks (DCCBs) and 8 State Co-operative Banks (SCBs) were not complying with the provisions of Section 11(1) of Banking Regulation Act, 1949 regarding maintaining of minimum value of paid-up capital and reserves of Rs. 1 lakh.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.